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SUBJECT: Goma Situation Report for December 13, 2007

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED - PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

Note: The following report was provided by Embassy Kinshasa's political officer in Goma. End note.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: MONUC General Narayan told embassy's Goma officer December 13 that FARDC losses in men and materiel from the December 3-12 campaign were light. Attacked by an Nkunda force of perhaps 200 at Mushaki, three FARDC brigades panicked and fled. The issues are leadership, training, and to a lesser extent logistics (to include pay). End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Poloff met MONUC North Kivu Brigade Commander General Indrajeet Narayan December 13 and posed two questions: what was the total damage to FARDC in the Mushaki fighting, and what was needed now to get the FARDC back on track? Narayan said that FARDC did not lose many men in the fighting. When attacked, they panicked. A mere Nkunda force of perhaps 200 men had "sailed through" three FARDC brigades. Narayan said there might have been 100 wounded and 30 dead among the FARDC. (Intelligence officer separately informed poloff that MONUC had evacuated around 150 casualties but there were undoubtedly others that had not come to MONUC's attention.) As for stocks of ammunition and arms, in Narayan's view these also were not a major problem, except ammunition for the two attack helicopters, where FARDC logistics had broken down and the helicopters had no ammunition for some days.

¶3. (SBU) Narayan said the number-one problem for FARDC was bad leadership. He had just told Chief of Staff General Dieudonne Kayembe, visiting Goma, that most of the 8th Military Region leadership had performed very badly. (Several were under house arrest, he understood.) He could point to only one officer, 82nd Brigade commander Colonel Jonas Padiri (a Tutsi), who had held his ground. The second requirement was training. Assuming effective leadership, FARDC would need six months of rigorous, structured training to contemplate another campaign. It was not enough to throw disparate elements together in brassage, without much training. Third, there were problems in logistics, for example the helicopters running out of ammunition and lack of pay for the soldiers. Narayan said that he believed the army could be reconstituted over time - the men were trainable and there were some good officers - but, however great the overhaul of the army, the problems of North Kivu would, in fact, not be resolved militarily.

¶4. (SBU) On developments of the past two hours, MONUC military and political briefers told poloff that the situation around Sake and Mushaki was quiet. However, at Katale, on the road to and near Masisi, the battalion of the 81st Brigade holding Katale had pulled back to Masisi after elements of the fleeing 14th Integrated Brigade arrived and began firing. Many civilians were fleeing toward Masisi. North Kivu Vice-Governor asked that MONUC move its base located at Masisi to Katale to protect it (refused). MONUC believes that Nkunda's forces are not involved at Katale. North of

Kitchanga, there has been fighting between Nkunda and FARDC, with Nkunda's forces continuing to hold Mweso and the FARDC now holding JTN tea plantation (near Mweso to the east). On the Rutshuru axis, an exchange of fire has continued at Rugari, causing further movement of civilians toward Kabumba.

15. (SBU) North Kivu Governor Julien Paluku, in conversation with poloff December 13, offered no ideas for resolving the Nkunda conflict. All DRC's diplomatic and military efforts had failed, he said. As in his conversation with the Ambassador December 3, he looked to the United States and international community to resolve the situation.

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